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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 000881

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR GENERAL WALLACE FROM AMBASSADOR KENNEY
STATE FOR EAP, PM, AND EAP/MTS
USPACOM ALSO FOR FPA HUSO AND J5
SECDEF/OSD/ISA/AP (TOOLAN/BAILEY)
JOINT STAFF/J5 (WILKES/ROBINSON/CLEMMONS)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR GENERAL WILLIAM WALLACE

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. General Wallace, welcome to the Philippines! I know your visit is short, but I am sure you will find it productive. You are coming to the Philippines at an important time. The Armed Forces of the Philippines is demonstrating impressive combat prowess in ongoing operations against Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists on the island of Jolo. Under the leadership of Chief of Staff General Esperon, the AFP is fully committed to the Defense Reform and Battalion Retraining Programs. You will have a chance to see some of these improvements yourself in visits to the Philippine Army's Training and Doctrine Command at Camp O'Donnell and Fort Magsaysay, the future home of a National Training Center. END SUMMARY.

INCREASED COMBAT PROWESS

¶2. (SBU) With U.S. support, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has begun to demonstrate impressive combat prowess in its ongoing anti-terrorism operation on the southern island of Jolo. AFP troops -- including soldiers, Marines, airmen, and sailors -- have remained engaged in sustained action against Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists since August 1, 2006. Improved operational readiness rates for aircraft and vessels, casualty treatment, night helicopter medical evacuations, and tactical field skills are directly attributable to U.S. training, advice, and assistance. During your visit, you will have the opportunity to watch a shoot-house demonstration by one of the Light Reaction Companies, the U.S.-trained and -equipped national-level counterterrorism force, whose combat veterans have participated in operations on Jolo. Fort Magsaysay is the planned future home of the Philippine military's National Training Center, which will closely follow U.S. doctrine.

COMMITMENT TO DEFENSE REFORM

¶3. (SBU) Much of the success on Jolo can be traced to the Philippine Defense Reform Program, which is transforming the Philippine military into a more transparent, accountable, and effective institution. This U.S.-supported effort aims at a complete restructuring of the military establishment ranging from personnel management and logistics to acquisition and training. With the advice of a 13-member team of U.S. experts, the AFP and Department of National Defense have already registered significant improvements in casualty care

and operational readiness rates. The newly begun Battalion Retraining Program aims to retrain all 78 Army and 11 Marine battalions. You will visit the new Training and Doctrine Command at Camp O'Donnell, where the AFP is also establishing a service-wide Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) Academy.

¶4. (SBU) Your counterpart, Major General Bernardo De Luna, plans to accompany you with his sergeant major throughout your entire trip. We take this as a very positive sign of his willingness to engage you on how to improve his fledgling command. AFP Chief of Staff General Hermogenes "Jun" Esperon has made enlisted and NCO development two of his top priorities. Your private dinner with General Esperon, Philippine Army commander Lieutenant General Tolentino, and Major General De Luna should offer you the opportunity for a frank and productive exchange among professional soldiers.

TIES THAT BIND

¶5. (U) Your trip will conclude with a simple wreath-laying ceremony at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial. Dedicated in 1960, the cemetery houses the remains of 16,363 U.S. military and 570 Philippine nationals who served with U.S. forces in the Southwest Pacific during World War II and memorializes over 36,000 others whose bodies were never found. It is the largest World War II cemetery operated by the American Battle Monuments Commission, and is a quiet reminder of the ties of blood shed together that bind our two countries together.

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